

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (currently amended) A lifting device comprising handle means and at least two pivotably connected frame members adapted to pivot between a first, open, configuration and a second, closed, configuration, wherein at least a portion of inner walls of the at least two frame members form a gripping surface, which gripping surface is adapted to lie substantially parallel with side walls of an article to be lifted when in the second, closed, configuration; wherein the handle means slope downward with respect to the article to be lifted when in the second, closed configuration.
2. (original) A lifting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the lifting device comprises two frame members which are pivotably connected at two points.
3. (original) A lifting device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the two pivot points are substantially coaxial.
4. (previously presented) A lifting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the frame members are shaped such that they define a substantially oval shaped aperture when in the first, open, configuration.

5. (previously presented) A lifting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the frame members are shaped such that when in the second, closed, position they define a substantially circular shaped aperture.
6. (previously presented) A lifting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the handle means comprises two handles each of which is attached to one of the two frame members and situated substantially opposite each other about the device.
7. (previously presented) A lifting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gripping surface defines a portion of an oval when in the first, open, configuration.
8. (previously presented) A lifting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gripping surface defines a portion of a circle when in a second, closed configuration.
9. (previously presented) A lifting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gripping surface comprises gripping means.
10. (original) A lifting device as claimed in claim 9, wherein the gripping means comprises a friction increasing material.

11. (previously presented) A lifting device as claimed in claim 9, wherein the gripping means comprises rubber or the like.
12. (currently amended) A lifting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gripping surface comprises retaining means adapted to retain the gripping ~~means~~ surface thereon.
13. (currently amended) A lifting device as claimed in claim 12, wherein the retaining means comprise a lip which ~~preferably~~ extends along a lower edge of the gripping surface.
14. (currently amended) A lifting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the frame members each comprise a first portion, proximal to the pivots, which first portions ~~preferably~~, when in the first, open, configuration, extend away from the pivots at substantially 180° to each other.
15. (original) A lifting device as claimed in claim 14, wherein when in the first, open, configuration the first portions of the frame members are substantially coplanar.
16. (previously presented) A lifting device as claimed in claim 14, wherein a second portion of each frame member extends away from an end of the first portion of each frame member distal to the pivots.

17. (original) A lifting device as claimed in claim 16, wherein when in the second, closed, configuration, the second portions of the frame members substantially coplanar.
18. (previously presented) A lifting device as claimed in claim 16, wherein the second portion incorporates the gripping surface.
19. (previously presented) A lifting device as claimed in claim 16, wherein the second portion extends away from the first portion at a downwardly sloping angle thereto.
20. (previously presented) A lifting device as claimed in claim 16, wherein the handle means extend away from the second portion of the frame members at a downwardly sloping angle thereto.
21. (currently amended) A lifting device comprising handle means and at least two frame members being connected by at least one pivot and adapted to pivot between a first, open, configuration and a second, closed, configuration, the frame members each comprising a first portion, proximal to the at least one pivot, and a second portion extending away from an end of the first portion distal to the at least one pivot, which first portions, when in the first, open, configuration are substantially coplanar and which second portions, when in the second, closed, configuration are substantially coplanar; wherein the handle means slope downward with respect to an article to be lifted when in the second, closed configuration.

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22. (cancelled)

23. (cancelled)